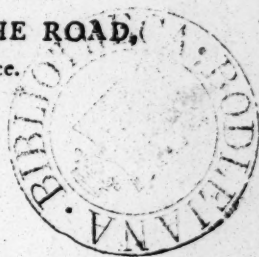


A DESCRIPTIVE
ACCOUNT
OF THE
DEVIL'S BRIDGE,
HAFOD,
STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY,
AND OTHER
SCENERY IN THAT DISTRICT
OF
CARDIGANSHIRE.

IN AN EXCURSION FROM
HEREFORD TO ABERYSTWITH;
COMPREHENDING
THE OBJECTS ADJOINING THE ROAD,
From the former to the latter Place.

THE FOURTH EDITION.



=Hereford=

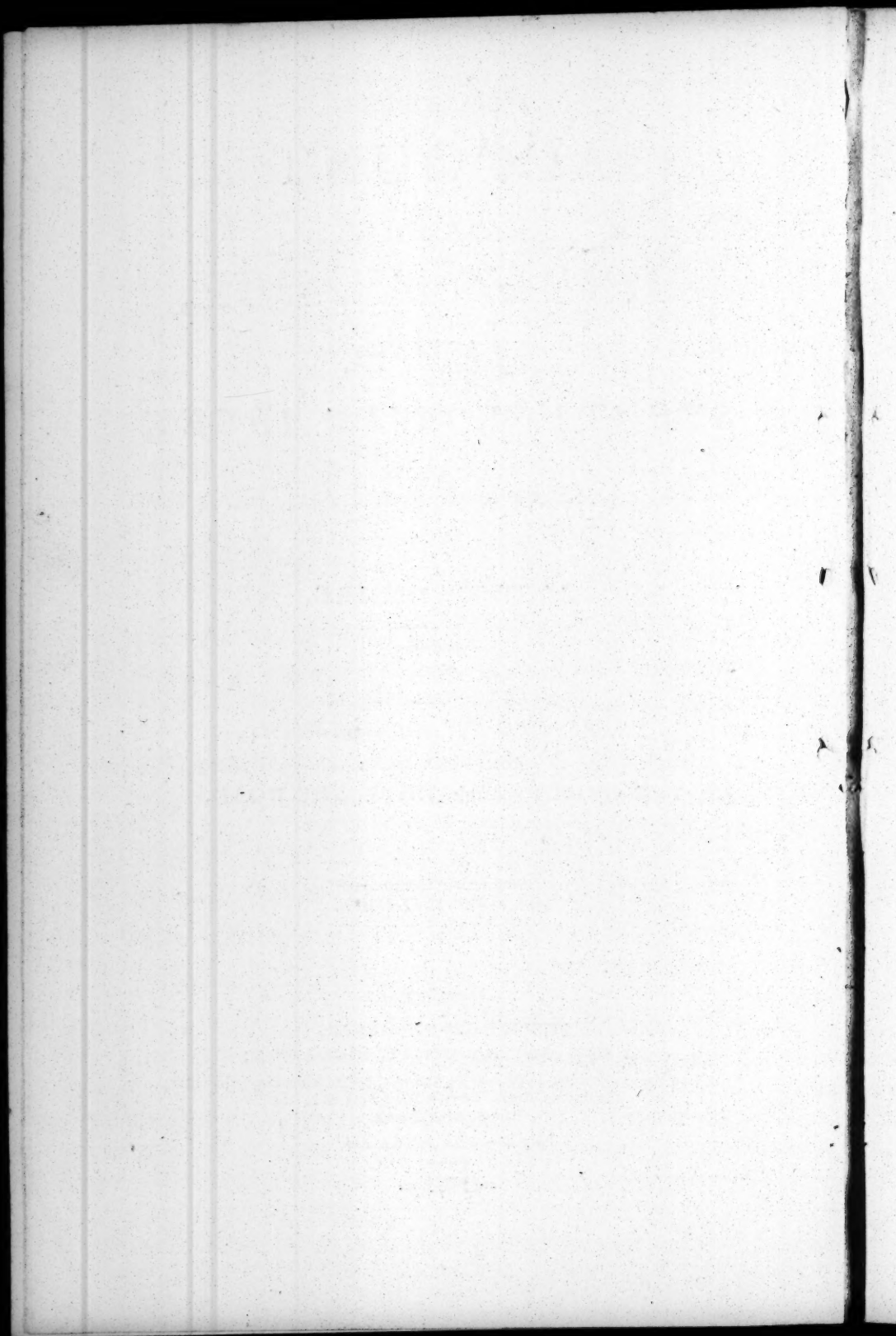
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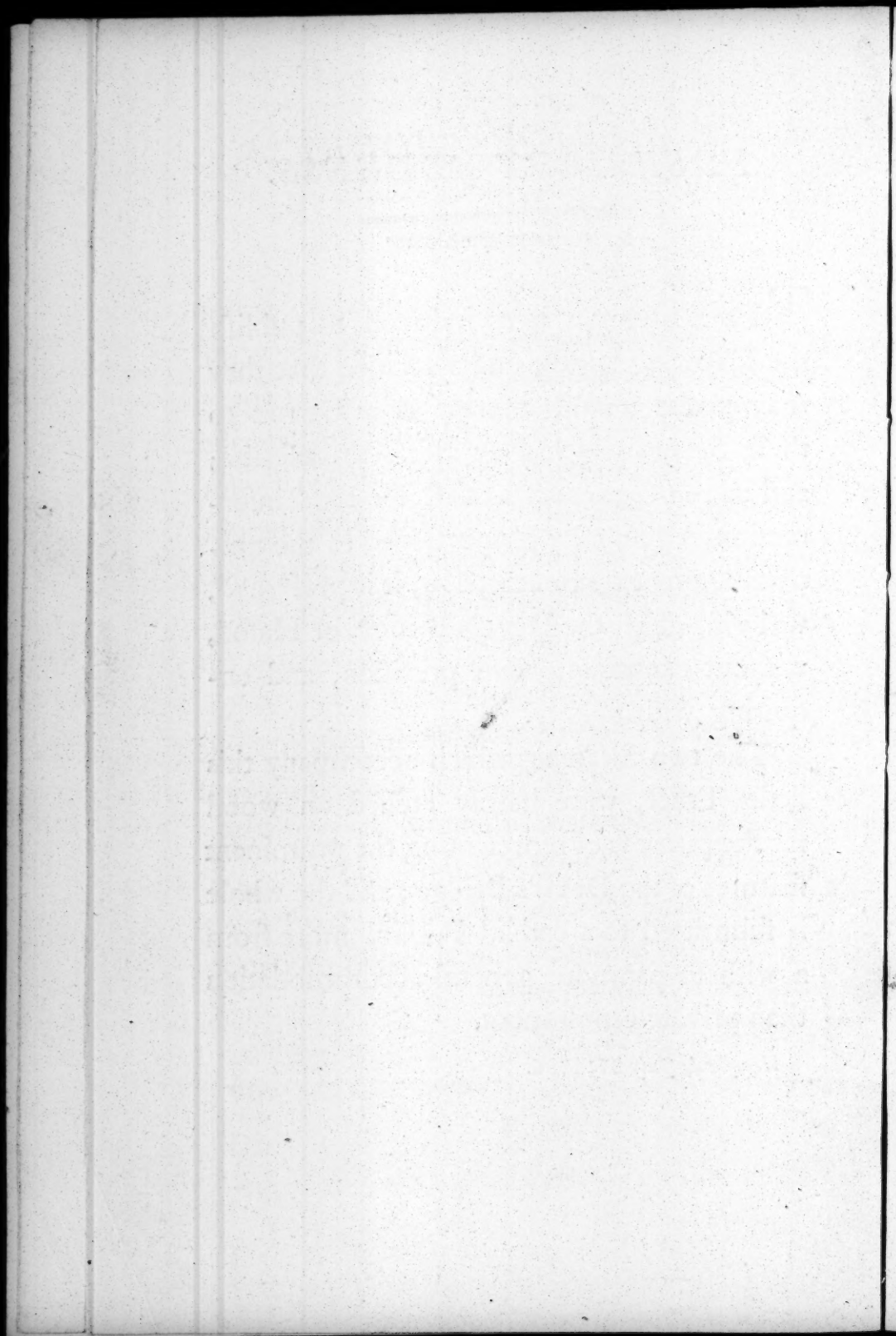


PREFATORY ADDRESS.

THE Editor has been induced to publish the following pages, under an idea that they may prove useful, merely as a GUIDE to those Scenes which they affect to describe; and as the Traveller's thirst for local information is generally proportioned to the gratification he experiences, few, it is presumed, will visit either the Devil's Bridge, or Hafod, without examining with precision, and enquiring with avidity.

The two Sketches which accompany this little Tract, were hastily etched on wood for the purpose of representing the prominent features of the Devil's Bridge; and the whole is submitted to a candid Public, more from a wish to promote general accommodation than private emolument.

Hereford, July 27, 1796.



DESCRIPTIVE
ACCOUNT
OF THE
*DEVIL'S BRIDGE, HAFOD,
&c. &c.*

IN AN EXCURSION FROM
HEREFORD TO ABERYSTWITH.

THE distance from Hereford to Kington, is nineteen miles. The road, which is one of the best in the county, is in many parts particularly pleasing, from the variety of views which succeed each other.

Near the eighth mile-stone, to the right, stands Foxley, the seat of Uvedale Price, Esq. The house is finely situate, and contains some excellent pictures; among others from the first masters, is a beautiful painting of Old Parr, by Reubens, in high preservation. The grounds and plantations are

laid out with much taste, and are very extensive: a charming ride, of nearly two miles in extent, through a wood of fine young oaks, leads to the point of a hill called Lady Lift, where the view opens in a delightful manner, and is deservedly admired by all who visit it. To the north-east, it looks over Herefordshire, to the Clee-hills in Shropshire, and the Malvern-hills in Worcestershire; and, to the south-west, the famous St. Michael's Mount, in Monmouthshire, is a fine object, with the Hatteral-hills, and the Brecon and Radnorshire mountains.

The turnpike-road to Kington, leads under this hill. Two miles further, near the road, is a handsome new-built house, called Sarnesfield, belonging to John Webbe Weston, Esq.; and a few miles to the left, is Newport, the seat of the Hon. Andrew Foley, who has a fine estate near it. On approaching Kington, the town, as seen from the road, forms a very picturesque object, from its church being situate on an

eminence, with some cultivated hills around it. This is a neat market-town, and, from its vicinity to Wales, has considerable intercourse with that quarter.

On leaving Kington, the road winds between some mountains, and passes under a few grand projecting rocks, called Stanner. The Vale of Radnor, and the opposite mountains, appear between these rocks in a most pleasing manner. Two miles from hence, to the left of the road, is seen the venerable church of Old Radnor: its situation on a hill, renders it a distinguished object. A few scattered houses only remain of the old town; beyond which, the road passes between two handsome family-seats---that to the left, called Harpton, is the residence of John Lewis, Esq.---and on the right is Downton, belonging to Percival Lewis, Esq. both of whom have considerable estates in this neighbourhood.

New Radnor, from its neglected appearance, and the antiquity observable in its buildings, may readily be mistaken by a

stranger for *Old Radnor*; but the former boasts a proud pre-eminence in being a borough, and has a Representative in the Senate of the nation.

A mile beyond this place, a short distance to the right, is a fine water-fall, called

WATER-BREAK-ITS-NECK:

The cascade is about seventy feet in perpendicular height, down a rocky chasm in the mountain. The inconvenience in visiting this scene, is the same that occurs in most others of a similar nature: to see it in all its grandeur, should be immediately after a considerable fall of rain, when the way to it is scarce accessible; but at such a period, a minute examination is less necessary, and the effect of a distant view must be truly sublime. In the summer season, the stream affords so scanty a supply of water, that the curious traveller may, with facility, explore the extremity of the chasm, and will be highly gratified with the novelty of the scene---the light from above being nearly

shut out by craggy, projecting rocks, the surrounding crevice wears a gloomy and most awful appearance. The following lines were written *extempore* by a Gentleman, a few years since, on viewing this admired spot:

With strange surprise, I view'd the wond'rous sight
Of *Water-break-its-neck*---stupendous height—
Whose craggy cliffs with wild confusion rise,
And, Atlas like, seem to support the skies:
Down from the summit of th'impending hills
A grand cascade descends in murm'ring rills,
And in meanders wild, and sportive play,
Through the subjacent vallies cuts its way.

---It is worthy of remark, that the spring which feeds this stream, rises on the summit of a mountain, and the place where the fall commences, seems to be almost as elevated a point as any of the commanding ground by which it is encompassed.

It is seven miles from Kington to this place; and from hence, over a road which has little to interest the curious, the distance is eight miles to Penybont, a village consisting only of four houses; of these, three are substantial modern-built mansions---one

is occupied as an inn, another is the residence of a private gentleman, and the third is the Radnorshire Bank, which, though its situation in this desert corner appears singular, has maintained extensive credit, and, on account of some considerable fairs held here, was found of general utility.*

After leaving Penybont a few miles, the prospect of the country gradually improves, especially near the village of Nantmel, whose church is seen to some advantage from different parts of the road; and a little to the left, on the side of a trifling ascent, is a neat house, called Llwynbarried, the residence of Mr. Evans: the situation is very pleasant, as it commands an extensive view, and the general nakedness of the country is well screened by some fine young plantations around the house. Five miles further, is the town of Rhayader, celebrated for se-

* John Price, Esq. the gentleman who established this Bank, died on the 19th of December, 1798, in the 76th year of his age. The very ample fortune which he acquired in this sequestered spot, and the public confidence reposed in his personal responsibility, were honourable testimonies of the extent of his dealings, and the irreproachable integrity of his conduct.

veral romantic scenes in its neighbourhood, and, what with some will perhaps be a primary consideration---a good inn, distinguished by the sign of the Red Lion, where the traveller will meet with an intelligent host, and very comfortable accommodations. ---At Rhayader, after having last seen it at Hereford, a distance of forty-five miles, we again meet with the river Wye, which here rushes over a rocky bed, and, under a substantial bridge of one arch, has a fall of some feet, from a situation in which it is nearly pent up by a ridge of projecting rocks. A handsome church was a few years since built for this parish, and there are a few good houses in and near the town, the situation of which is altogether novel and pleasing.

The road from hence to the Devil's Bridge (eighteen miles,) exhibits a scene which will forcibly arrest the attention of the stranger to the romantic beauties of South Wales. For the first three miles, there is a continued ascent, but the trouble of gaining the summit is amply compensated by the

charming scene which constantly presents itself, on turning round to observe the country which is left behind, where the town of Rhayader, and Vaga's lovely stream winding through a fertile vale below it, combine to form a landscape of the most inexpressible beauty. From the top we are presented with a contrast that is really awful: the winding road, after a descent into the valley of about a mile, hangs on the shelving sides of steep, smooth, and lofty mountains, well clothed with verdure, spotted with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle; and these sometimes at such "a giddy height that makes one dread, lest the unsure ground should slide beneath their feet, and send them down, a living ruin, to the deeps below; for, from the haughty sides of these hanging lawns, down to the water-worn, smooth, dark rock, that forms the torrent's bed, not a shrub, or furzy protuberance, appears to break their fall."

This scenery continues for some miles through the valley, with only now and then

the intervention of a shepherd's cot, till a short turn of the road unexpectedly leads over a handsome, modern stone bridge, which pleases the stranger in a degree proportioned to his surprise at meeting abruptly with so elegant an accommodation in the midst of a district frightfully barren and bewildered. The road now winds under craggy precipices, and passes close to some old mines of lead ore: this, too, is no small novelty in so dreary a spot; but all seems in unison---for the engine-wheel, and the other apparatus used in the process, bear evident marks of having been constructed when mechanics were in an infant state, and are consequently susceptible of great improvement. "The dingy scrofa, impending above the high-road, choaks the river into which it falls, and which now runs broad and shallow through the vale, manifesting to the admiring spectator the amplitude of the excavations into the bowels of the rock, whilst the powder-blasted gloomy crags, that scowl above the aperture, convey no bad idea of

the sulphurous soil of Milton's nether world." There are a few cottages erected for the workmen at this place; so that they are nearly secluded from the world, and run little risque of having their morals contaminated by an intercourse with the vicious. The curious observer, who has never before seen a similar work, will be highly gratified in examining the various forms in which the ore is found in its native element; and he will probably be surprised at the appearance and dimensions of the shaft, through which, the miners say, they have completely perforated the mountain, and have formed an accessible subterraneous passage all the way.

From these mines the road continues through the glen a short way further, when, winding round the mountain on the right, "the crisped heads of Hafod's woods, burst all at once on the astonished eye. To the right, the road to Aberystwith ascends the verdant hills; below them, the little church of Eglwys Newydd presents its modest front, half buried in oaks, seated on a

little knoll; in front, the woody valley, with the Ystwith in its bottom, opens before us, crowned on the left with sloping, lofty hills; while, in the midst, a smooth mound, half concealed with oaks, rises among the shades, and seems designed by nature as a centre--- whence, nor too high, nor too low, the whole expanse around, of intermingled beauties, may continually feed the eye."

Just below the spot whence this view is taken, stands an inn, with a few cottages, called Pentre', or more commonly known by the name of Cwm-Ystwith, in which parish it is situate. This is the mid-way between Rhayader and Aberyystwith, being exactly fifteen miles from each; and is the only public-house upon that road where any sort of accommodations can be met with, unless at the Devil's Bridge (three miles further,) where, as it is the professed design of this little Tract to guide the traveller, we shall proceed without stopping, and afterwards direct his attention to Hafod, Strata Florida Abbey, and other scenery deserving of notice in this district.

Pursuing the post-road from Cwm-Ystwith, the line of which is to the right of Hafod, a small rise leads to the summit of a chain of mountains of considerable extent, whose tops end in so many irregular and various shapes, and form so undulating an horizon, that a warm imagination might almost conceive, that the mountains were impelled and driven on by a supernatural storm, in immense waves and broken swells.

These scenes serve as a prelude to the expectation of the stranger, in approaching

THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE,

Where, if he has travelled a long and dreary stage, he will meet with comfortable refreshment at the Hafod-Arms, a neat and pleasant inn, which has been recently fitted up on a small, but genteel scale, and affords such accommodation, of good beds and hospitable entertainment, as can scarcely be expected in so remote a situation. The house stands in front of the river Rhyddol, and the back part commands the most pic-

turesque view that fancy can depict, embracing the fine sloping hills on each side the river, thickly mantled with oaks, ashes, elms, and hazels, from the downmoſt bottom to the uppermoſt ſummit.

This famous Bridge, ſo much the object of curioſity and wonder, is called in Welch, *Pont-ar-Fynach*, or Mynach Bridge, and is but a few yards from the inn, being ſituate on the road leading from Llanidloes, in Montgomeryſhire, to Aberſtywith, in Cardiganſhire (to which county it belongs)---eighteen miles from the former, and twelve from the latter; but it is ſo completely environed with trees, that doubtleſs many people, who are not directed by taſte, or intent upon deep reſearch, paſs over it without the leaſt ſuſpicion either of the dreadful aperture it embraces, or the ancient ſtructure that carried them over the gulph.

The Bridge conſiſts of two arches, one thrown over the other. The foundation of the under one is of great antiquity; and becauſe it bears marks of a hazardous under-

taking, the common people claim a right to attribute it to the invention of the Devil, who, they suppose, had some mischief in his head when he built it; but certainly it did not require the skill of so excellent an architect, to throw an arch over a chasm not more than twenty feet wide. The fact is, however, pretty clear, that it must have been built as far back as the year 1087, in the reign of William the Second, by the Monks of Strata Florida Abbey, the ruins of which are yet visible about ten miles from hence, in the direction of Hafod. Gerald mentions passing over it, when he accompanied Baldwin, Archbishop of Cambray, at the time of the Crusades in the year 1188, and reign of Richard the First. The original arch being suspected to be in a decayed state, the present bridge, which was built over it in the year 1753, at the expence of the county, was erected upon a centre formed upon the old one. The timber-frame was removed as soon as the new bridge was completed. Both arches

still remain, though the lower is now useless; but it is providently left, as it may answer the same purpose again, in case any accident should happen to the upper. The width of the old bridge is scarcely twenty feet; but as the crevice increased in extent, so must the arch, and the present may be about thirty feet over.

They span a chasm in a tremendous rock, which, when viewed from the dingle where the stream runs, has an appearance awfully sublime; and the rays of the sun being intercepted by the elevated situation of the trees, which grow impending over this impetuous torrent, adds much to the sublimity of it---

..... Here, retir'd
From little scenes of art, great Nature dwells
In awful solitude!

The cleft in the rock has been greatly enlarged, if not originally caused, by the force of the perpetual cataract, the rapidity of which is increased by its confinement. The depth of the water on the

north-east side, from whence the bridge is seen to the greatest advantage, is in some places upwards of twelve feet, and, from the highest arch to the water, is ninety-nine feet. On the south-west side, close to the bridge, it measures one hundred and fourteen feet: this difference may be ascribed to the declivity under it, which is very considerable.

The river, bursting from its restrained course, through broken rocks, and interrupted by fragments, becomes a more even and translucent stream for about forty yards south-west of the bridge, till within a few yards of the fall, where it is confined to narrow limits by the rocks: from whence, bursting with terrific roar, it is carried about six feet over the craggy ridge, and, descending eighteen feet, is received into a basin, along which it flows twenty-four; whence it again rushes with equal impetuosity to a descent of sixty feet. The fall is now interrupted by another receiver, which, like the former, appears to have been worn to

an amazing depth. The agitation of the water, and the mist occasioned by the fall, which, by strangers, is often mistaken for rain, prevents an approach sufficiently near for sounding it. Along this basin it hastens to another descent of near twenty feet, and, reaching that extent, meets with obstructions of massy rocks and stones of prodigious size: these it encounters with irresistible violence, and forces its way about twenty-two feet, to the precipice of the greatest cataract. The water, then uniting, passes with an almost inconceivable force over the brink of the rock, and becomes a large sheet; in that state it falls upwards of one hundred and ten feet, except being divided near the middle of it by craggy pieces of rock.

The river Rhyddol, for near three miles from this spot, is encircled with hills of vast magnitude, some wholly cloathed with trees, except an intervention here and there of frightfully projecting rocks, the bottoms of which are very dangerous and difficult of access; but a situation near the brink of the river

once obtained, the spectator is amply repaid with a scene the most solemn and beautiful. To describe the various sounds the different breaks in the cataract produce, can best be done by a simile to a variation of the keys in music; and to depict the scenery with which you are here surrounded---elevated woods, rocks, and the rushing of a river falling more than two hundred and eighty feet---can be more faithfully done by the pencil of the Artist, than by the most descriptive pen.

The following is a Table of the exact height from the top of the Bridge to the water underneath, and the different falls from thence, till the Mynach delivers itself into the Rhyddol below:

FALLS, &c.	FEET.
From the Bridge to the Water ...	114
First Fall	18
Second ditto	60
Third ditto	20
Grand Cataract	110
From the Bridge to the Rhyddol	322

In the preceding table, the natural declivity of the different basons through which the water passes from one fall to another, is not included, and must add materially to the admeasurement. The grove through which the Mynach passes, also rises to a very considerable height above the bridge; so that this river, in an extent of little more than half a mile, has a fall of at least 500 feet before it joins the Rhyddol.

Tradition says, that a set of robbers (two brothers and a sister,) called *Plant Mat* or *Plant Fat* (*i. e.* Matthew's children,) concealed themselves in a cave near the bason of the first fall from the bridge; and that, although they committed various depredations on public and private property, their retreat was not discovered for many years.

All in the freshness of the humid air—

There, in the hollow'd rock, grotesque and wild,

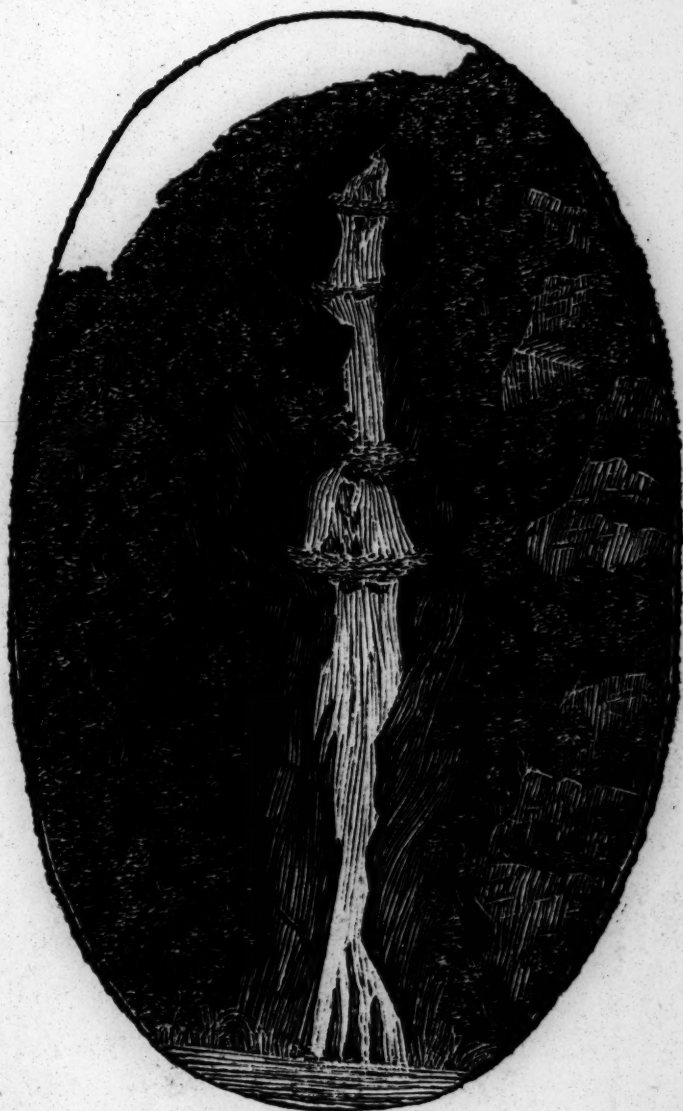
A deep and ample cavern, and overhead

By flowering umbrage shaded,

is still shewn to the curious, as the sanctuary of these daring marauders; and it seems

at least calculated to afford an asylum to those whose pursuits are hostile to the keen research of "day's garish eye."

It will be necessary for strangers to take a guide from the inn, to conduct them to those stations where, on the one hand, the towering bridge and the tremendous chasm, and, on the other, the wonderful cataracts, are seen to the greatest advantage. After passing the bridge, a short turn to the right, leads to the only track down to the base of the rock, which is rather steep and rugged; but the conductor will safely point the way, or assist the visitor in descending---From hence he will again mount up to the bridge, and, by next taking a small circuit to the left, will perceive a path which winds through the grove on the face of the bank, to a situation admirably calculated for a commanding view of the various falls, which burst upon the astonished sight, in all their sublimity and grandeur, and with every effect of a magical representation. From this spot he may with the assistance of a second per-



THE WATER-FALL.

PAGE 28.

Devil's Bridge
Massford

1868



VIEW OF THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE.
PAGE 28.

Phil Cooke Esq

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son, explore his way to the bottom of the hill, if he wishes to see the junction of the Mynach with the Rhyddol below.

The Editor considers these instructions of some importance, as those who volunteer their services as guides to the hidden wonders of this place, from having become familiar with scenes which will possibly strike the spectator with terror and amazement, are not always in a humour to traverse the same course, especially when half the trouble will secure the expected fee. And he was himself a witness of the necessity of this caution, when, in conversing with a gentleman at the inn, he discovered that his conductor had contented himself with shewing this stranger the bridge only, and the aperture over which it is thrown, leaving him to feast in imagination on the cascade, which is so much the subject of admiration, and which he believed to be merely the invention of the delusive historian or fanciful poet. By personally attending him, however, to the enchanting scene, he was

convinced of the flagrant abuse, and, in proportion to the gratification which he felt, was urged to correct the manners of the lazy clown by the unerring rhetoric of the horsewhip.

We will now take the liberty to subjoin an elegant description which has recently been given of this place, by the scientific Mr. Cumberland:

“ That which renders the residence of Hafod the most remarkable, is, that, with all its natural beauties, it is close in the vicinity of mountainous forests, of a character totally different from its own---of a character, I may add, totally unlike any thing I ever before beheld, and which many people think superior to any place in Wales.

“ The region to which I allude, is about those vallies, folding within vallies, of sides precipitous, and cloathed with endless woods, seated at the very foot of Plynlimmon, into which the waters of the Fynach and the Rhyddol are poured, as it were, from their urns (for both are in sight at once,)---the

former, coming down from beneath the Devil's Bridge, has no equal for height and beauty that I know of; for, although a streamlet to the famous fall of Narni, in Italy, yet it rivals it in height, and surpasses it in elegance.

“ One excursion to this place, will not suffice common observers; nor indeed many, to the lovers of the grand sports of nature: and, although the intended paths are not as yet sketched out, I shall recommend to those who can bear the fatigue of climbing among dingles---who, in search of beauties, are capable of descending from the ‘Hilly
‘ crofts, that brow the bottomed glades,
‘ down to the dark sequestered rocks be-
‘ low’---to enter upon the Fynach stream about four miles from Hafod, and skirt it, as well as they can, down to the Devil's Bridge. To do this, I will fairly confess, that, in the present state of things, they must creep often through thickets ‘dank or dry;’ sometimes encounter ‘the undergrowth of
‘ shrubs and tangling bushes;’ ‘tempt the

‘ steep glade,’ treacherous with flaty ruins;
 pass over ‘ rocks with frowning brows;’ ‘ be
 ‘ lost in leafy labyrinths, and thickest shel-
 ‘ ter of black shades embowered:’ but then,
 in reward for all this, I can fairly promise
 them (for I experienced those pleasures
 fully,) they shall as often find themselves in
 ‘ umbrageous grots, and caves of cool re-
 ‘ cefs, over which the ivy creeps;’ behold
 ‘ the murmuring water-falls down the sloped
 ‘ dell dispersed,’ or ‘ in a glassy pool unite
 ‘ their streams;’ see ‘ crisped brooks, with
 ‘ mazy error, under pendant shade, offer-
 ‘ ing their glassy, cool, translucent waves;
 ‘ midst grots and caverns, shagged with
 ‘ horrid shade;’---and, as a specimen of
 these scenes, I would have subjoined two
 out of twenty spots, in a space less than a
 mile, on this romantic stream, computing
 from the slate-quarry, and water-mill under
 Mr. Hughes’s farm, to the Devil’s Bridge;
 beneath the dreadful double arch of which,
 the future walks are intended to be con-
 ducted, so as to bring the spectator sud-

denly, as by enchantment, into the front of that incredibly stupendous chasm of inter-volving vallies, cloathed to their misty top with wood of

Thickest covert, interwoven shade, a verdant wall; beneath, the receptacle of many waters, the principal of which is the Rhyddol, strongly marked by the foaming cataract, and the broad boiler that receives it: but too distant below for its roaring tide to be audible by day.

“ As to the Fynach, its fall is so nearly perpendicular beneath the Devil’s Bridge, and it has so far to travel down to what is called the Devil’s-hole, that, to view it in all its detail, it is necessary to cross the bridge, and go round to the point of a mountain*---whence, as from a stage, the whole lies delightfully expanded.

“ After passing deep below the bridge, as ‘ through a narrow firth, with noises loud

* This is the situation to which the stranger has already been directed to pursue his course, through a winding path to the left of the bridge---page 28, line 18.

‘and ruinous,’ into a confined chasm, the fleet waters pour headlong and impetuous, and, leaping from rock to rock, with fury, literally ‘lash the mountain’s sides;’ sometimes almost imbowered among deep groves, and flashing at last into a fan-like form, they fall rattling among the loose stones of the Devil’s-hole---where, to all appearance, it shoots into a gulph beneath, and silently steals away: for, so much is carried off in spray, during the incessant repercussions it experiences, in this long tortuous shoot, that, in all probability, not above half the water arrives at the bottom of its profound and fullen grave.”

Having now communicated all the information which it has been possible to collect, or is likely to prove gratifying to the admirers of this stupendous scene, we shall next proceed to

HAFOD,

The charming feat of Thomas Johnes, Esq. about four miles from the Devil’s Bridge,

in a south-east direction. The road is barren and uninteresting for three miles, when some extensive plantations, and a neat, new-built lodge, announce the approach to Hafod. The entrance, from this direction, is by a fine, well-formed road, which winds through a spacious wood, and, after a descent of considerable length, leads to the house, nobly situate in a lovely vale, with the river Ystwith close below it.

Although the expectation of the stranger is generally wound up to an elevated pitch, from the far-famed celebrity of this sweet place, yet the gratification afforded to its visitors, more than compensates the most exalted hope; and nothing can be more striking, after travelling over the open, high mountains that surround it, than the scene that opens to view, on reaching the Vale of Ystwith, near Hafod. The elegance and singularity of the building, environed by grand, woody hills, with the clear stream beneath, render it altogether as charming a

retirement as fancy can depict. The house is finished from a design of Mr. Baldwyn, the Bath architect, upon a plan entirely novel, being a mixture of the Moorish and Gothic, having painted windows and turrets. It corresponds finely with its peculiar situation, and is fitted up with exquisite taste and neatness: the furniture is elegant---the library extremely handsome---and, besides several good pictures, statues, and antiques, there is some beautiful Gobelin tapestry, in high preservation.

The different walks through the woods, extend six or seven miles, and exhibit a variety of picturesque scenery, cascades, &c. which alternately charm and surprise. A water-fall, in particular, seen rushing down a precipice of one hundred feet, as viewed through a crevice in the rock, has a most wonderful effect. A diversity of bridges are happily introduced---such as the Alpine, the rustic, &c. There is also a spacious green-house, two hundred and eighty feet

long, containing very promising plants; and a neat flower-garden between the woods, is a grand and most pleasing object.

“ Hafod,” says Mr. Cumberland, “ is a place in itself so pre-eminently beautiful, that it highly merits a particular description. It stands surrounded with so many noble scenes, diversified with elegance as well as with grandeur; the country on the approach to it is so very wild and uncommon, and the place itself is now so embellished by art, that it will be difficult, I believe, to point out a spot that can be put in competition with it, considered either as the object of the Painter’s eye, the Poet’s mind, or as a desirable residence for those who, admirers of the beautiful wildness of nature, love also to inhale the pure air of aspiring mountains, and enjoy that *santo pacé* (as the Italians expressively term it,) which arises from solitudes made social by a family circle.

“ Hafod, to all these charms, unites inducements which, though not uncommon in England, have there, at such a distance

from the capital, a peculiar grace. It has a capacious stone-mansion, executed in the pleasing, because appropriate stile of Gothic architecture; situate on the side of a chosen, sheltered dingle, embowered with trees, which rise from a lawn of the gentlest declivity, that shelves in graceful hollows to the stream below.

“ From the portico, it commands a woody, narrow, winding vale; the undulating forms of whose ascending, shaggy sides, are richly cloathed with various foliage, broken with silvery water-falls, and crowned with climbing sheep-walks, reaching to the clouds.

“ Neither are the luxuries of life absent; for, on the margin of the Ystwith, where it flows broadest through this delicious vale, we see hot-houses, and a conservatory; beneath the rocks, a bath; amid the recesses of the woods, a flower-garden; and within the building, whose decorations, though rich, are pure and simple, we find a mass of rare and valuable literature, whose pages

here seem doubly precious, where meditation finds scope to range unmolested.

“ In a word, so many are the delights afforded by the scenery of this place and its vicinity, to a mind imbued with any taste, that the impression on mine was increased after an interval of ten years from the first visit, employed chiefly in travelling among the Alps, the Appenines, the Sabine Hills, and the Tyrollese; along the shores of the Adriatic, over the Glaciers of Switzerland, and up the Rhine; where, though in search of beauty, I never, I feel, saw any thing so fine---never so many pictures concentrated in one spot.

“ Wales, and its borders, both north and south, abound, at intervals, with fine things: Piercefield has grounds of great magnificence, and wonderfully picturesque beauty. Downton-Castle has a delicious woody vale, most tastefully managed; Llangollen is brilliant; the banks of the Conway savagely grand; Barmouth romantically rural; the great Pistill Rhayader is horribly wild;

Rhayader Wennol, gay, and gloriously irregular---each of which merits a studied description.

“ But, at Hafod, and its neighbourhood, I find the effects of all in one circle; united with this peculiarity, that the deep dingles, and mighty woody slopes, which, from a different source, conduct the Rhyddol’s never-failing waters from Plynlimmon, and the Fynach, are of an unique character, as mountainous forests, accompanying gigantic size with graceful forms; and, taken altogether, I see the ‘ sweetest interchange
‘ of hill and valley, rivers, woods, and
‘ plains, and falls, with forests crowned,
‘ rocks, dens, and caves;’ infomuch, that it requires little enthusiasm there to feel forcibly with Milton, that

All things that be, send up from earth’s great altar
Silent praise!

“ There are four fine walks from the house, chiefly through ways artificially made by the proprietor; all dry, kept clean, and composed of materials found on the spot,

which is chiefly a coarse stone, of a greyish cast, friable in many places, and like slate, but oftener consisting of immense masses, that cost the miner, in making some part of these walks, excessive labour; for there are places, where it was necessary to perforate the rock many yards, in order to pass a promontory, that, jutting across the way, denied further access; and to go round which, you must have taken a great tour, and made a fatiguing descent. As it is, the walks are so conducted, that few are steep; the transitions easy, the returns commodious, and the branches distinct. Neither are they too many, for much is left for future projectors; and if a man be stout enough to range the underwoods, and fastidious enough to reject all trodden paths, he may, almost every where, stroll from the studied line, till he be glad to regain the friendly conduct of the well-known way.

“ Yet one must be nice, not to be content at first to visit the best points of view by the general routine; for all that is here done, has been to remove obstructions, re-

duce the materials, and conceal the art; and we are no where presented with attempts to force these untamed streams, or indeed to invent any thing, where nature, the great mistress, has left all art behind.”

The following lines, neatly illustrative of the sovereignty of nature over the intrusion of art, cannot be more properly introduced than in this place, where they so happily adorn and strengthen the judicious and very respectable opinion of Mr. Cumberland on this subject:

THE GENIUS OF HAFOD.

Formal slaves of art, avaunt!
 This is Nature's secret haunt:
 The Genius of the Landscape, I
 Guard it, with a jealous eye—
 Guard it, that no footstep rude
 Upon her privacy intrude.
 Here, with mystic maze, her throne
 Is girt, accessible to none
 But to the highly-honour'd few
 To whom I deign to lend my clue;
 And, chief, to him who, in this grove,
 Devotes his life to share her love;
 From whom she seeks no charms to hide—
 For whom she throws her veil aside,

Instructing him to spread abroad
 Scenes for *Salvator*—or for *Claude*.
 Far, oh far hence, let *Brown* and *Eames*
 Zig-zag their walks, and torture streams!
 But let them not my dells profane,
 Or violate my Naiad train;
 Nor let their arrogance invade
 My meanest Dryad's secret shade,
 And with fantastic knots disgrace
 The Native honours of the place—
 Making the vet'ran oak give way,
 Some spruce exotic to display:
 Their petty labours be defy'd,
 Who *Taste* and *Nature* would divide!

The politeness and liberality of the worthy owner of Hafod, diffuses double pleasure to the admirers of the sublime scenery with which it is surrounded.---For the public accommodation, tickets are left at the Hafod Arms, Devil's Bridge; and these will secure ready access to objects which, in this district, will not be expected to greet the stranger's eye, and stand, perhaps, unrivalled, even in climes

Where Taste is tempted, and where Nature smiles.

To the remains of Strata Florida Abbey, situate about nine miles from Hafod, we

I shall now direct the attention of the traveller. The ride is extremely pleasing and rural, and carries much of the general feature of the country through which we have lately passed.---At the village of Rhôs-fair, which is about half-way, there is a public-house, where the guest who is no stickler for epicurean niceties, will meet with homely fare. From hence until we approach the delightful Vale of Tivy, a few miles further, the country still continues wild and barren; but, on going round the end of the mountain, to descend into the vale, an extensive and most charming view presents itself---the river winding through the valley for many miles, with some fine mountains on each side, terminated by a distant prospect of the sea, constitute a scene of much grandeur and beauty. The situation of

STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY

Is, like most other monastic ruins, in a lovely spot---surrounded by rich meadow ground, screened and protected by some

woods and lofty mountains, with the river Tivy running close under them. The observer is naturally led to think, that the good Monks who fixed on this spot,

To watch and weep—for all, to feel and pray,
Allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way,

were possessed of all that was necessary to promote their earthly comfort, and were not at all liable to be interrupted in their meditations, as a more beautiful retirement,

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
could scarcely be wished for. Strata Florida was an Abbey of White Monks, founded in 1164, by Rhys ap Gryffydd, Prince of Wales. It was rased to the foundation during the wars of Edward I. in 1294; but it was soon after re-built, and was at that time valued at 118l. 17s. It served as the sacred repository of the bones of several of the Welsh princes; and the records and acts of the Principality were preserved here, from 1156 to 1270.

The remains of the Abbey are few---some loose fragments, and a Saxon gateway, are

all that are now visible; but the latter is of great beauty---

Sunk are thy towers, in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mould'ring wall.

A view of the gateway from a little garden near it, with a mountain seen through the arch, a few trees, and a farm-house, form a very picturesque subject. These precious remains are only divided by a wall from the present church-yard, where a plain little chapel has been erected from the ruins of the ancient structure.

The rustics in the neighbourhood retain the highest respect for this venerable spot, which is still used as a principal burying-ground, where they all wish to be laid, near the remains of those

Holy men who taught the aspiring soul,
On strong devotion's eagle plume to rise;
Who knew the frantic passions to controul,
And rais'd our grov'ling wishes to the skies.

The Tivy, at this place, appears merely as a diminished stream; but, twenty or thirty miles from hence, near Killagwen, and in that neighbourhood, its grand woody banks offer

some beautiful scenery, much resembling the views near the Wye, at Chepstow, &c.

From Strata Florida Abbey, the visitor will have the option of regaining the post-road to Aberystwith, by varying the line back, and leaving Hafod to the left, which will bring him to the inn at Pentref, or Cwm-Ystwith, mentioned in page 19, where he may pass the night; or he may pursue a more direct way from the Abbey, if he has time to reach Aberystwith the same evening, as he will not find any convenient lodging short of that place. By the latter route, a small circuit would include a view of the fine old mansion belonging to Lord Viscount Lisburne, called Cross-wood; and there is also, in this direction, a great variety of delightful scenery, which will yield ample gratification to the admirer of those beauties which so eminently distinguish this district of the Principality.

About seven or eight miles from the Devil's Bridge, the road to Aberystwith forms a fine terrace nearly all the way to that place,

on the side of a chain of mountains, with the charming vale of Rhyddol on the right, through which the river of the same name is seen winding its course to the sea. This valley presents a very grand and extensive scene, continuing not less than ten miles, among rocks, hanging woods, and varied ground, which in some parts becomes mountainous; while the river is every where a beautiful object, and, twice or three times in its passage through the vale, is interrupted in its course, and formed into a cascade.

The unexpected manner in which this delightful prospect bursts into view, upon gaining the summit of a mountain, naturally arrests the progress of the traveller, who is intuitously rivetted to the spot, minutely to admire the fascinating beauty of the opening scene; which continues to attract his attention, until he reaches

ABERYSTWITH.

This is a sea-port town, situate in the Bay of Cardigan, and open to the Irish, or St.

George's Channel. An immense number of company resort to this place, during the summer, for the benefit of sea-bathing; and it has several inns---among which, the principal is the Talbot, where the accommodations are both extensive and genteel.

At the extremity of the town, upon a point of land, stand the ruins of an ancient castle; of which little now remains but a solitary tower, overlooking the sea. It was rendered famous, by being at one time the residence of the great Cadwallader, and, in all the Welsh wars, was considered as a fortress of the first consequence; and, even so late as the civil wars of the last century, was esteemed a place of great strength.

“ But the rich lead mines in its neighbourhood, were the basis of its glory. These mines are said to have yielded near a hundred ounces of silver from a ton of lead, and to have produced a profit of two thousand pounds a month. Here Sir Hugh Middleton made the vast fortune, which he ex-

pended afterwards on the New River, constructed for the purpose of supplying the northern side of London with water. But a gentleman of the name of Bushell, raised these mines to their greatest height. He was allowed by Charles the First the privilege of setting up a mint in this castle, for the benefit of paying his workmen. Here, therefore, all the business of the mines was transacted, which made Aberystwith Castle a place of more consequence and resort than any other in Wales. King Charles also appointed Mr. Bushell governor of the isle of Lundy; where he made a harbour for the security of his vessels; which carried the produce of his mines up the Severn. When the civil wars broke out, he had an opportunity of shewing his gratitude, which he did with the magnificence of a prince: he cloathed the King's whole army, and offered his Majesty a loan, which was considered as a gift, of forty thousand pounds. Afterwards, when Charles was pressed by the Parliament,

Mr. Bushell raised him a regiment among his miners, at his own expence.”

Mr. Price, whose estate of Foxley, in the county of Hereford, is mentioned in page 9, has recently finished a very pleasant house at Aberystwith; intended merely as a summer residence, for the benefit of sea-air and bathing; for which purposes, nothing could be more happily calculated. It is built upon rather a novel plan, close to the site of the old castle, and so very near the sea, that, in spring-tides, its walls are literally washed by the waves; but that which would be objectionable in the winter, when the family never resort thither, is a recommendation to a spot which, in the summer, is fanned by the healthful sea-breeze, and embraces an uninterrupted view of the interesting variety constantly observable upon the bosom of the ocean, with the other exclusive advantages for which the situation was happily chosen.

In returning from Aberystwith, the ride may be varied, by taking a direction through the vale of Rhyddol---which will afford an

opportunity to the inquisitive traveller, of viewing the fine old church of Llanbadarn, rendered an object of some curiosity, from its having formerly been a bishoprick: it is a very ancient structure, but without any vestige of ornament; and the situation is altogether pleasant. After skirting the river for about four miles through this delightful vale, the road ascends a steep woody mountain, and soon after joins the post-road to the Devil's Bridge, along the beautiful terrace which has been already described.

THE END.

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